



Department of Toxic Substances Control



Winston H. Hickox
Secretary for
Environmental
Protection

Edwin F. Lowry, Director
10151 Croydon Way, Suite 3
Sacramento, California 95827-2106

Gray Davis
Governor

May 18, 2000

Mr. Michael Cornell
Remedial Project Manager
Department of the Navy
Southwest Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
1220 Pacific Coast Highway
San Diego, California 92132-5190

**APPROVAL OF REMOVAL ACTION IMPLEMENTATION REPORT AND
CONFIRMATION SAMPLING DATA REPORT, SITE 49 REMOVAL ACTION, SALT
WELLS PROPULSION LABORATORIES AND CHINA LAKE PROPULSION
LABORATORIES, INDUSTRIAL WASTE PONDS AND SUMPS, NAVAL AIR
WEAPONS STATION, CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA**

Dear Mr. Cornell:

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) received the document entitled: Draft Final Implementation Report, Removal Action at Site 49, dated April 1999, and Confirmation Sampling Data Report, dated May 3, 2000 (Reports). The Reports document the removal action and the confirmation sampling conducted at Site 49, Salt Wells Propulsion Laboratories and China Lake Propulsion Laboratories Industrial Waste Ponds and Sumps. The removal action was performed by the IT Corporation and the confirmation sampling was conducted by Tetra Tech EM Incorporated.

The objective of the removal action was to minimize or eliminate potential sources of contamination which could pose a human health risk and/or an environmental concern. The contamination present is primarily explosive chemical residue. The action consisted of the excavation and abandonment of 21 wastewater evaporation ponds; excavation and abandonment of underground piping associated with evaporation ponds; cleaning and abandonment of concrete structures associated with the evaporation ponds; and decontamination of metal fixtures removed from the concrete

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structures. The concrete and metal debris were steam cleaned and recycled on-site. Approximately 6,785 tons of excavated impacted soil was transported to the Class II Laidlaw Buttonwillow facility in 1997 and disposed of.

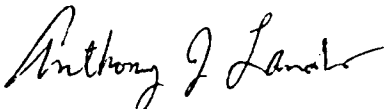
The confirmation sampling was performed to verify that impacted material had been removed during the interim removal action. Results of the confirmation sampling show that the primary source of contaminated material has been removed and that the risk to human health and the environment has been substantially reduced. However, some residual contamination remains. As stated in the conclusion of the confirmation sampling report *"While the removal action was successful in removing the primary source of contamination at Site 49, additional characterization and evaluation under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act will be required in the future to assess the potential risk based on remaining soils. In addition, characterization of soils associated with nearby IR Site 8 will also be required."*

Based on the information presented, DTSC accepts and approves of the work documented in the Reports. However, as presented above, additional characterization will be required to fully evaluate the risk posed by the remaining contamination to human health and the environment.

DTSC is concerned with the schedule on this project. The excavation and confirmation sampling were conducted in 1997 and the completion report was received on May 3, 2000. In the future, reports that confirm and document activities undertaken should be provided within 120 days of the completion of the field work. Based on the information presented in the report, we agree that additional characterization is needed. Please provide your schedule for performance of the additional work.

If you have any questions, please call Mr. Mike Purcell at (916) 255-3698.

Sincerely,



Anthony J. Landis, P.E.
Chief
Northern California Operations
Office of Military Facilities

cc: See next page.

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cc: Mr. Dan Goss
RAB Co-Chair
2700 Maturango Street
Ridgecrest, California 93555

Captain John Langford
Commanding Officer
Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake
1 Administration Circle
China Lake, California 93555-6100

Mr. Jim McDonald
NAWS Activity RPM
1 Administration Circle
China Lake, California 93555-6100

Mr. Stephen Niou
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Lahontan Region
15428 Civic Drive, Suite 100
Victorville, California 92393-2359